

JOINT MEETING OF THE
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2004, 9:30 A.M.

Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission

George Patty
Paul DeCamp
Lynn Russell
Sangeetha Rao

Augusta-Richmond County

Heyward Johnson
Travis Davidson

CAC

Ben Donaldson
Phil Croll

Others

Dena Levitz, Augusta Chronicle
Preston Sparks, Augusta Chronicle
Greg Patin, WGAC
J. C. Lexow, Aiken Standard

Aiken County

Jeanene Knapp

GA DOT

David Griffin
Radney Simpson
Beth Edmiston
Tony Sack
Scott Stephens

SC DOT

Brian Fulmer

LSCOG

Dean Legge

Columbia County

Ronnie Hutto
Tim Young

1. Consider approval of the minutes from the joint TCC and CAC meeting held on February 11, 2004.

CAC - Mr. Croll moved and Mr. Donaldson seconded the motion to approve the February 11, 2004 minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

TCC - Mr. Johnson moved and Ms. Edmiston seconded the motion to approve the February 11, 2004 minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

2. Issues and Concerns

(a) Prior

There were no prior issues to discuss.

(b) Current / New

Mr. Simpson of GA DOT made a request to consider changing the time for the TCC and CAC to 10:30 a.m. Mr. Croll stated that was not a good time for him, but would consider 10:00 a.m. Everyone present agreed to this new time.

Mr. Croll asked what can be done on Wheeler Road at the northbound exit ramp of Bobby Jones Expressway. He has witnessed many near accidents and road rage incidents. A suggestion was made to install permanent lane dividers on eastbound Wheeler Road @ the exit ramp so as to prohibit cars from blocking the thru lanes in an effort to reach the turn lane into Robert C. Daniel Parkway. This request will be forwarded to Augusta Public Works for consideration.

Mr. Legge asked SC DOT to check the new SC 118/US 78 intersection for an upright metal or iron post that could be a safety hazard.

3. Status of Project Reports:

(a) Georgia Highways

Mr. Griffith presented this item.

- ♦ Plans and right-of-way are 100% complete on the bridge replacement on Columbia Road @ Crawford Creek (PI#0000809). This project will be let for bids in April.
- ♦ Right-of-way plans have been sent to GA DOT on the safety improvements project on Washington Road @ Gibbs Road (PI#0003662). This project will be let soon.
- ♦ The right-of-way acquisition is complete on the grade separation project of Parham Road at the CSX railroad (PI#271040). This is a joint effort with Augusta Public Works and DOT. This project should also be let for bids before the end of the fiscal year.
- ♦ Plans are complete and right-of-way acquired on the intersection improvement project at SR 56 and New Goshen Road (PI#0001419). This project is scheduled to be let for bids in April.
- ♦ A concept team meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2004 on the ATMS/Transportation Command Center project (PI#227810). Concept development should begin soon. The project is scheduled to be let in FY 2005.

(b) South Carolina Highways.

Mr. Fulmer presented this item. The status of two projects has changed since the last meeting.

- ♦ SC 118 is now 82% complete.
- ♦ Contract negotiations are ongoing for preliminary design work on the Georgia Avenue Extension project. Preliminary design activities will begin in March 2004.

(c) Augusta Public Transit

Mr. Johnson presented this item. There are three new Blue Bird buses in production. Inspections will be made in March and delivery is scheduled for April. The Regency Mall bus stop was relocated to K-Mart on Deans Bridge Road. Route headways were changed to every 30 minutes. A letter was sent to K-Mart requesting to lease 600 square feet of space for installation of a 12 x 30 shelter. The Augusta Commission will meet this month to decide on projects to be included on the next list of the Special Local Option Sales Tax. APT is requesting \$1.5 million for transit projects. Part of this will fund a transfer facility in south Augusta in FY 2006. The Augusta Commission will make the final decision on the list of projects to be placed on the sales tax referendum ballot.

(d) Aiken County Transit

Ms. Knapp presented the item. She announced that the "Commuter Choice" Program, discussed at the February meeting, has been put on hold until October of this year. The delay is due to the fact that the group of sixty foreign nurses will not arrive in Aiken until the fall. The program represents a joint venture between Aiken County and Aiken Regional Medical Centers. Once in Aiken the nurses will be staying together and working the same shift at the medical center. Negotiations are ongoing to work out transportation issues during their stay. Commuter Choice is a tax deduction for either the employee or employer. If the employer pays the transit fare, the employer can write off the expense. If employees pay the fare, they can have it deducted from their payroll before taxes are deducted. In other news, two new buses are due to arrive in April. With the arrival of these buses, Best Friend Express will be crossing over to Augusta's transfer facility.

4. Consider recommendation to approve the South Carolina portion of the draft FY 2005 - 2007 Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Fulmer presented this item. The reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Program is still being considered. TEA-21 was scheduled to be renewed last year. In order to meet scheduled deadlines, SC DOT has taken the current TIP and drafted a three year program (FY 2005-07) with the current funding levels. Once the new transportation bill is enacted changes can be made to the TIP.

CAC - Mr. Croll moved and Mr. Donaldson seconded the motion to approve the draft TIP for the South Carolina portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

TCC - Mr. Johnson moved and Mr. Fulmer seconded the motion to approve the draft TIP for the South Carolina portion of the study area. The motion was unanimously approved.

5. Early Action Compact – An Air Quality Initiative

(a) Aiken County

Mr. Strohming presented this item. Aiken County is on schedule and has met all the milestones at this point.

(b) Richmond County

Ms. Rao presented this item. On December 31, 2003 Georgia EPA sent US EPA a six-month progress report on the Augusta Early Action Compact (EAC). EPD and the city have thus far met every milestone in the EAC. EPA will announce 8-hour ozone nonattainment designations on April 15th. Aiken and Richmond Counties are expected to be designated as attainment areas, meaning that they meet the federal air quality standards for ozone. Anyone wishing to obtain additional information should contact Ms. Rao.

6. Update on Special Studies Projects

(a) Whiskey Rd.- Silver Bluff Rd. Connector Study

Ms. Knapp presented this item. This study is essentially complete. The project subcommittee, formed to evaluate the alternative routes included in the study, will be meeting again this evening. The subcommittee will make a formal recommendation to Aiken City Council and the Aiken County Council.

(b) North Augusta Access Management Study

No one was available to present this item.

(c) Columbia County Transportation Study

Mr. Young presented this item. A draft of the final report is being reviewed by Georgia DOT and Columbia County. As the document is finalized several identified projects will be forwarded to the ARTS for recommendation to include in the Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

(d) ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. URS has been working on background information for a couple months. The first round of public meetings is scheduled for April 12 & 13, 2004. There will be one meeting on the 12th from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM at the Columbia County Government Complex. Two meetings on will be held on the 13th - one from 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM in Aiken, and another at the Augusta-Richmond County Civic Center from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Paul DeCamp
Planning Director